

# Español descompuesto: Attitudes towards English and Spanish in the South Valley

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If language is a reflection of ourselves, then positive or negative attitudes toward language have major implications for one's personal identity. Even though these attitudes may manifest themselves differently in each individual, collectively, certain patterns start to emerge. These patterns do not surface arbitrarily; rather they are shaped in specific contexts. Thus, this study asserts that the community plays an important role in constructing language attitudes. Our aim is to collect data on the attitudes of community members, in order to examine what this means for language maintenance in the South Valley of Albuquerque, New Mexico. This investigation is driven by questions that ask not only what this community's attitude toward Spanish and English are, but also how these attitudes influence upcoming generations, and what implications arise for the heritage language teacher.

In their article on beginning level Spanish-as-a-Heritage Language Learners (SHLLs), Sara Beaudrie and Cynthia Ducar (2005) analyze students' attitudes toward Spanish and the implications for teachers. They argue that "instructors need to continuously assess students' attitudes and beliefs to see if the class is having the intended impact; namely, increasing the potential for maintenance of the heritage language as well as reconnecting students to their cultural, heritage and linguistic background" (p. 4). The authors find that, even though beginning level SHLLs may not be proficient in Spanish, they will have positive attitudes toward the language and a deep cultural and historical connection to it. The current study expands on such research by looking at what attitudes toward the language are held in the community. The methodology is based on that of Kati Pletsch de García (2007). Although it is not within the scope of this project to measure how language attitudes impact potential SHLLs, we discuss the possible effects such attitudes could have. This investigation will observe the patterns that emerge from the collected data to interpret these patterns in relation to language maintenance.

## Methodology

This investigation is based on the study conducted by Kati Pletsch de Garcia in 2007 in Laredo, Texas. Pletsch de Garcia conducted a survey with 66 students in her classes at Texas A&M International University (p. 2). The questions she used in her survey were:

1. What do you call the dialect that is spoken in Laredo?
2. Please describe or define what the word used in #1 means to you.
3. Who uses this word to describe what is spoken in Laredo?
4. What value do you place on speaking this way? (p. 2)

The South Valley study differs from the Laredo survey in several ways. First, the participants in the South Valley study are not limited to students. The ages range between 18 and 65+. Since the South Valley study was conducted at several different locations with people of all ages and backgrounds, it may also have a wider significance than the Laredo study. The locations where the interviews were conducted included. Secondly, the South Valley study has additional questions added from Pletsch de Garcia's original four, because it is meant to glean information about words and language attitudes that were not covered in the Laredo version. Question 5, as seen below, was added to obtain opinions from informants on what attitudes were held previously, and where they foresee them in the future. Question 6 was added in order to investigate if people believed a negative or positive attitude stemmed from a certain existing section of the community, which could

include sentiments of anti-immigration. Lastly, this study does not look at community signage as it was not feasible for this study to employ this type of collection.

This particular study was conducted by interviewing bilingual informants who voluntarily agreed to participate in this study<sup>1</sup>. The participants were current or former residents of the South Valley, who had spent time in the area. Most of the interviews were recorded, but a few were written. Some were conducted in English and others in Spanish, as decided by the informant. Demographic data was collected such as: age, gender, ethnicity, informants claimed region, and how long they have lived in the South Valley. The following questions were asked:

1. What do you call the dialect that is spoken in the South Valley?
2. Please describe or define what the word means to you.
3. Who uses this word to describe what is spoken in the South Valley?
4. What value do you place on speaking this way? Explain.

Table 1. Total responses according to positivity, negativity, and neutrality.

- Do you think attitudes toward the language have changed? Or will change?

| Question      | Positive      |            | Negative      |            | Neutral       |            |
|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
|               | #             | %          | #             | %          | #             | %          |
| 1 & 2         | 11/29         | 38%        | 9/29          | 31%        | 9/29          | 31%        |
| 3 & 4         | 22/29         | 76%        | 7/29          | 24%        | 0/29          | 0%         |
| 5             | 18/28         | 64%        | 5/28          | 18%        | 5/28          | 18%        |
| 6             | 7/26          | 27%        | 9/26          | 35%        | 10/26         | 38%        |
| <b>Total:</b> | <b>58/112</b> | <b>52%</b> | <b>30/112</b> | <b>27%</b> | <b>24/112</b> | <b>21%</b> |

- Where do you think negative or positive attitudes toward the language stem from?

## Results

This section of the investigation provides the overall results of language attitudes toward English, Spanish, and code-switching. It is then broken down by the questions asked in the interviews. Some sample responses from the participants are included, as well as commentary and an interpretation of what these responses mean for language maintenance in the South Valley.

As can be seen in Table 1, 52% of the participants' demonstrated positivity towards the dialect of the South Valley, with 58/112 total responses. However, the degree of positivity varied depending on the question asked. Questions 3 and 4 had an overwhelming majority of positive responses, while for question 6; the majority of the responses were negative. Also, questions 1 and 2 had no substantial differences between responses, since they are equally distributed across all three categories. Due to these individual differences, the following sections will provide a qualitative analysis of each question.

### What dialect is spoken in the South Valley and how would you describe it?

The first two questions are combined, because both responses go hand in hand: the first offers information on the type of dialect spoken in the South Valley, while the second gives a positive, negative, or neutral description of the dialect. Participant responses to these two questions varied. However, from observing the data, certain patterns surfaced based on the frequency of descriptions and terminology used. For the first question, seven main terms emerge that are used to refer to the Spanish spoken in the South Valley of Albuquerque, New Mexico: Spanish, Latin<sup>2</sup>, Northern Mexican Spanish, Bilingual

language, Chicano Spanish, Spanglish, and New Mexican Spanish. These are the dialects that members of the community used to label the language spoken in the South Valley and are listed as a continuum from positive to negative:

(+) Spanish > Latin > Mexican > Bilingual > Chicano > Spanglish > New Mexican (-). The further one moves to the right, the more negative the descriptions become. As participants expanded on these terms, it became apparent that not all the variations of Spanish are considered equal within the community. In Table 2, one can see a few of the most popular descriptions used to refer to each dialect. It is evident that as more code-mixing occurs between the two languages, the more opportunities arise for criticism by certain members of the community.

In Pletsche de Garcia's analysis of speech attitudes in Laredo, Texas, she notes that every speech community has its own belief systems about language. She further articulates that negative attitudes "are often espoused by monolinguals or by individuals who have not had the opportunity to participate as a member of the in-group within a border community" (p. 13). Recent research on bilingualism has found empirical evidence that evinces language structures employed by these speech communities to be intact and not degenerate grammars. Rena Torres Cacoullos and Catherine Travis (2003), argue that contact between languages does not change the structure of either language, but rather changes the frequency of certain forms. For example, they look at the subject expression of 'yo' and 'I' in spontaneous discourse within the presence of code-switching<sup>3</sup>.

Contrary to the hypothesis that code-switchers would show a higher rate of *yo* expressions due to the influence of English, this was not true. This type of research refutes the idea that Spanglish or New Mexican Spanish

is “*descompuesto*”, rotten and decomposed, and instead portrays it as a skillful interchange between two different linguistic systems. The implications this has for the teacher in the heritage classroom is significant and will be further explored after a discussion of the types of speakers who engage in this discourse and the values they have for certain dialects.

### **Who uses this word to describe what is spoken in the South Valley?**

The two previous questions asked participants to answer what dialect is spoken in the South Valley and to describe or define its significance. This question answers how people in the community identify those who speak a certain dialect. The majority of the participants stated that New Mexicans speak “this” dialect. Those who identify themselves as Chicanas/os claimed to speak a different dialect than those who identified themselves with the Mexican culture. Norma Mendoza-Denton (1999) further explains this identification where “Chicanas and Chicanos have a distinct culture within the United States, with their own cultural traditions, history, expressive culture, celebrations, and language. Their linguistic varieties-composed of Chicano Spanish and Chicano English and their variants-differ from both the Mexican and the American standard varieties” (p. 40). The dialect of both English and Spanish that is spoken is marked as different either from the ‘standard’ English or Spanish when considering lexicon, phonology and morphosyntax.

Furthermore, those who identify themselves within the community additionally denote that a separation exists within the people when specifying their dialect. From the responses, people tend to separate themselves racially and rate the importance of their language that most identifies them. Compared to Mendoza-Denton, a

northern and southern division exists within the community, where the northern can be seen as the New Mexican Spanish spoken by native New Mexicans and the southern as the Mexican Spanish spoken by those who recently arrived or identify themselves as Mexican or Mexican-American. Although not literally stated by the participants, they do make the obvious distinction of ‘us’ and ‘them’. Mendoza-Denton mentions that the southerners will be dominant Spanish speakers, which could be seen as a symbol of “Mexican pride” and their attitudes “run directly counter to larger social expectations that immigrants will learn English” (p. 44). The comments below are examples from our data collection, by people who consider themselves Mexican or Mexican-Americans:

I was born in Mexico, so my first language was Spanish and coming here I learned English. And people from New Mexico are more who speak the Spanglish, the combination of the two. It depends who you are referring to.

Me ha tocado que la gente Hispana casi no te quiere hablar español. Los que se esfuerzan más son los norteamericanos, los nativos de aquí. Eso sería preguntarle a la gente Hispana que no te habla español. Le preguntas ¿hablas español? y dicen no, no hablo y no hacen el esfuerzo para tratar de darse entender. Obvio que tienes que aprender ingles pero a veces es difícil entender algunas palabras. Es natural de los que viven aquí mezclar los dos idiomas.

El de aquí habla español, pero no lo habla verbal como nosotros, nosotros lo sabemos bien, lo hablamos rápido.

*Las personas de aquí hablan español e ingles. Están hablando español y no le entiendo porque mezclan porque ellos tienen aquí mucho tiempo. Personas que han nacido acá tienen que ser bilingües, sus padres han vivido acá.*

These participants associate themselves

more with the Mexican culture and language. In some cases they feel that those who have altered the Spanish language are “losing sight of what it means to be authentic, even to the degree that

**Table 2.** Dialects and their descriptions

| What dialect is spoken in the South Valley? | How would you describe it?   |
|---|--|
| Spanish                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pure Spanish,</li> <li>• intelligible wherever you go,</li> </ul>   |
| Latín <sup>2</sup>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>hablar español correcto,</i></li> </ul>  |
| Northern Mexican Spanish                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unfamiliar words to some New Mexicans,</li> <li>• not the Spanish from Spain,</li> <li>• families of Mexican descent,</li> </ul>  |
| Bilingual language                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>dos idiomas,</i></li> <li>• it's two people in one,</li> </ul>   |
| Chicano Spanish                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different words, slang,</li> <li>• imperfect Spanish,</li> <li>• words get twisted,</li> <li>• <i>las reglas de los dos los confunden,</i></li> </ul>   |
| Spanglish                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mixed, weird, not pure,</li> <li>• Spanish and English at the same time,</li> <li>• <i>medio complicado, un poquito quebrado,</i></li> <li>• 1/2 English + 1/2 broken Spanish,</li> <li>• <i>de los jóvenes,</i></li> </ul>         |
| New Mexico Spanish                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not proper,</li> <li>• a lot of Spanglish,</li> <li>• words are switched from regular Spanish,</li> <li>• lazy...they make up their own words,</li> <li>• <i>español descompuesto,</i></li> <li>• <i>de los ancianos</i></li> </ul> |

they no longer speak good Spanish” (Mendoza-Denton, 1999, p. 44). To them, speaking Spanish or mixing two languages is not a term they identify with.

On the other hand, those considered northerners identify as Chicanas/os and are aware of their differences in dialogue when compared to Mexicans. Most people who were born in the U. S. lay emphasis on “their language ability and bicultural identity. Since the majority of them were born in the United States or immigrated as young children, they are native English-speakers” (Mendoza-Denton, 1999, p. 44). Those who identified themselves as Chicana/o are those who described the dialect unique to the area or their identity. The following are examples are from our data collection and are given by those who identify themselves as New Mexican and/or Chicana/o:

South Valley accent from Chicanos that have been here for a while who have intonations or certain expressions that come from the South Valley.

I speak Chicano Spanish; it is different from Mexican Spanish. The words are different, I don't understand the Mexican Spanish real good, we never spoke it at my house.

The people from the South Valley. We have our own language, English and Spanish, it's everywhere, you need it to survive. The majority of the people got to be bilingual to survive in the South Valley.

*Gente que al igual que yo que son Chicanos o también Mexicanos pero que saben el inglés algo que anda entre los jóvenes y adultos también.*

From the responses it is clear that people make a connection between the language they use and the group with which they identify.

Additionally, the shift that normally occurs between ascending generations is not apparent in the South Valley. Normally it is observable

that Spanish from the second generations and on, will isolate themselves from the immigration experience and language. This is similar to the study done by Pamela L. Anderson-Mejías (2003) in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas where “societal language shift away from Spanish to English does not appear to follow the traditional three generation pattern,...perhaps due in part to the large Spanish speaking population encountered there, which continually increases as a result of the arrival of first generation immigrants” (p. 1). Many residents of the South Valley are those who have lived here many generations and even though they may consider their Spanish as ‘broken’ or different, they have not abandoned the language. As Guadalupe Valdes (2000) states, “because of the continued influx of new immigrants and because of the spatial concentration of persons speaking the same language especially in border areas, retention of Spanish in Latino communities is often greater” (p. 103). The South Valley community is fairly close to the border, therefore experiencing the continuous influx that Valdes describes, which stems from both English and Spanish. Spanish maintenance is clearly identifiable from those participants who claim to have lived in the South Valley for more than twenty years.

In relation, the idea of code switching from Spanish to English or vice versa is seen as a strategy. This phenomenon is usually not observed in people who are mainly dominant in one language. Beginning from people who were born in the U. S., it is unmistakable that they select their choice of language depending on social context and interlocutor. These strategies are seen as a means of different registers and “their code switching appears to be a marked choice where they decide to use the other language as a device for social inclusion, emphasis of expression or other rhetorical reasons. It indicates their lin-

guistic identities as second generation speakers of the Rio Grande Valley and is legitimate for usage in all social environments” (Anderson-Mejías 2003, p. 10). Undoubtedly, the South Valley compares with the Lower Rio Grande Valley in that most people preserve a reasonable connection with Spanish as generations ascend. For residents in both valleys, maintaining Spanish is based on their desire or necessity of communicating in the community.

### **What value do you place on speaking this way?**

Participants were asked to rate the value they place on the Spanish spoken in the community, whether relating to it or not. Out of the 29 participants, 22/29 or 76% placed significant value, while 7/29 or 24% placed low value. These percentages were determined based on key words from participants that relate to value or devalue. The value that speakers of Spanish place on the language affects their actions and attitudes. Mariana Achugar (2008) mentions that, “language ideologies have direct consequences on people’s lives. The notion of ‘correct’ or ‘proper’ language skills is used to justify social difference and inequalities” (p. 2). People will devalue a language when believed it is not spoken in ‘standard’ form, since these forms constitute social prestige. For this reason, language instructors often come in contact with students who have preconceived notions of their spoken heritage language. In most cases it is associated with a negative attitude since they feel their Spanish is not a ‘standard’ form of speaking the language. Below are some comments made by those who do not place high value on ‘non-standard’ Spanish varieties:

It’s not something I would speak if I were doing something professional; it’s more of a casual talk.

It’s good for the area, but confusing for other

people who don’t live here. The language from here does not make sense to others from other places or countries.

Besides Chicanos saying words wrong, they finish their sentences with English. Spanish is devalued by it being spoken this way.

*Si hubiera valor pero sería mejor mejorarlo, pero creo que es imposible* Muchos hablan palabras mal dichas, poniéndole donde no va. Chicanos pronuncian la ‘h’. Los papás son los culpables.

I don’t like Spanglish, because it’s obviously not even a language itself.

*No tiene valor porque no es correcto, no es inglés y no es español. Es usar los dos idiomas al mismo tiempo. Se debe hablar español correctamente y Spanglish no, porque no es la forma correcta de hablar.*

Achugar further states that “in multilingual settings languages are perceived to be in competition... standard language ideology is coupled with monolingual ideology... knowing and using only one language is the ‘natural’ or default linguistic behavior” (p. 3). Since both Spanish and English are prevalent in the community, this causes those who are monolingual in either language the urge to preserve it in its most standard form. Unfortunately, monolingual speakers of either language suggest that combining both languages signifies speaking neither one correctly. Yet, when constant contact is occurring it is nearly impossible to purify either language. This concept of attempting to retain the language as ‘pure’ may be related to the simple intention of protecting the language from English. Adding to this idea, Achugar mentions that “the value of a language always goes hand in hand with the social status of the communities that use it. Over time, valuations of languages and communities shift in response to changing socio-historical circumstances” (p. 5). These circumstances are characterized as low varieties

of Spanish in which over time the 'immigrant' language experiences change. Therefore, causing bilingual communities the inaccessibility to master "the registers and styles characteristic of even ordinary Mexican monolingual" (Valdes, 2000, p. 107). As a result of what may be a complicated scenario, the first step in living in a dual language community would be to understand the history of the community and pinpoint the cause of such diversity of languages. While it is observable that the South Valley is a dual language community, this concept of duality would require further investigation which is not analyzed in this study.

On a positive note, research done on bilinguals and bilingual communities indicates that the skill of mixing two languages simultaneously indicates proficiency in both languages. Those who place high value on speaking any variety of Spanish and English understand that having contact with both languages does not impede the learning of either language. Some positive commentaries on this subject are:

Cuando yo hablo con una persona que habla Spanglish, nos entendemos mejor.

It represents our culture and kind of represents our traditions. We kind of do it second nature, we don't necessarily think of it, we use as part of our daily lives.

It's the only way for me, I'm worth two people. I think it's a new language, everywhere you go they are speaking it.

*Toda comunicación tiene valor si se puede comunicar, mas que sea quebrado tiene valor.*

*Es un valor muy grande porque esta una ejerciendo los dos idiomas.*

As a result, and as concluded by Mora, Villa and Dávila (2006), it is not unreasonable "to assert that Spanish will continue to have a strong presence in this country throughout this century, as geographic migrations seems to be out-

pace language shift" (p. 252). It is clear from the percentage results that a positive value outweighs any negative views. This indicates that people will continue to place prestige on both English and Spanish in all its diversities.

Do you think attitudes toward the language have changed? Or will change?

The overall pattern of the data for question 5 includes much more respondents that believe a positive change is occurring, in which supports the speaking of Spanish, and secondarily "Spanglish" in the South Valley. With a positive response measured at 64% of those interviewed, it is significant that many view attitudes as having changed for the better. The positive responses emphasize an interest by young people, the impact of Mexican immigrants' language varieties, and interest in the language by outsiders. As for the 18% of negative responses, they tend to highlight the prejudice they experienced from people who do not understand or respect the language and culture. The negative responses also suggested the increased embarrassment of speaking Spanish in certain situations. The neutral responses from participants indicated a small change had occurred or could not determine whether that change was positive or negative.

The positive responses observed in this portion of the survey were widely varied. Some pointed to Mexican immigrants as a reason why the attitudes toward Spanish have changed:

I would think that when I was growing up in High School there were very few Mexican immigrants or sons and daughters of Mexican nationals. It wasn't as prevalent and now, because the demographics have switched so much, it has totally revitalized the language in the South Valley. It's the dominant language I would say.

This assertion can be supported by Bills and

Vigil's (1999) New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey results. They state that: "the strongest influence of Mexican immigration [and therefore Mexican varieties of Spanish] has been along the southern border of New Mexico and in the large urban areas." (p. 49). In Albuquerque's South Valley, there seems to be much more Spanish speakers than in any other part of the city. Evidence to support this is the presence of many monolingual Spanish speakers within the community – this is displayed by the street signs, products carried in grocery stores, and much more anecdotal evidence. Bills and Vigil go on to explain that quite a few words that would, in other areas, traditionally use the term associated with the Spanish of New Mexico are being replaced with the Mexican terms (Bills & Vigil, 1999, p. 56). In addition, more people are moving towards a more 'standard' or 'educated' Spanish because of the increased exposure in educational institutions to formal Spanish (Bills & Vigil, 1999, p. 56). Finally, Bills and Vigil state that: "to the extent that they are exposed to local spoken Spanish through their peers, the language tends to be the colloquial Spanish of New Mexico. Those peers tend to be immigrants and the children of immigrants, who make up an ever larger proportion of the young people who claim to be Spanish speaking" (Bills & Vigil, 1999, p. 58). This shows that, indeed, many of the people interviewed in this survey are from a more recently immigrated population. Many of the teachers at South Valley Academy, a local high school that encourages the use of Spanish, responded that many of their students speak the Mexican varieties and not the New Mexican variety.

Perhaps one of the most interesting responses from our collection refers to previous generations being punished for speaking Spanish and its effect on subsequent generations.

Going back to why a lot of my friends don't speak Spanish – the mentality before was that parents used to be – I mean this is back in the day, you know – it used to be that they would be made fun of for speaking Spanish and so that's why they didn't want to pass it on to their kids. But now, those kids, which are my generation of people, are the ones that are saying no, it's important, we want it. And I really think that also, it opens up opportunities being bilingual. I think it's positive, going in a positive direction.

This informant refers to a previous occurrence in New Mexico's educational system that is discussed at length in MacGregor-Mendoza's article on linguistic repression in the schools of the Southwest. The long-term consequences of this type of repression can leave scars that extend across generations. Educators in New Mexico used to think that "because of their link to communities that are of diminished political standing, heritage languages are often considered by majority communities to be obstacles to the effective assimilation of heritage speakers to the mainstream society" (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2000, p. 356). It is because of this belief that "no Spanish rules" were espoused in schools. The period just after desegregation forced Spanish-speaking students to coexist with their English speaking peers, when before were segregated into their own schools (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2000, p. 358). Many of the punishments were physical in nature and left a lasting impression on these students. Several informants in MacGregor-Mendoza's study "reported feeling ashamed of their home language, parents, culture, and heritage due to the punishments received for speaking Spanish in school" (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2000, p. 364). As MacGregor-Mendoza goes on to state, this generation of people would "opt not to use the language with their own children in hopes of eliminating what they viewed had

been an obstacle to their own education” (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2000, p. 364). Overall, the linguistic trauma could account for some of the responses to question 5 as well as the proceeding question.

The results for this question implicate that, for the most part, informants believe attitudes towards Spanish have changed for the better and will continue to do so, especially in regards to the manner in which Spanish is treated in schools, in addition to the influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants. Within the context of heritage programs at universities, the response to this question would indicate the success of these programs in encouraging development of the formal or standard varieties of Spanish, even though people seem to place a low value on Spanglish or the regional variety. These results would also affirm the inclusion of receptive bilinguals who may belong to the generation following those that had been raised in a school system that punished them for speaking their heritage language.

### Further Research

Future investigations of the South Valley could emulate the study done by Poplack (1980) in the Puerto Rican community in New York, where she implemented not only a survey to gather information on community members' attitudes toward Spanish, English, and code-switching, but also an ethnographic study of the community and a quantitative sociolinguistic analysis of selected linguistic behavior. Her study draws important conclusions on the different types of code-switchers, types of code-switching, and the implications that certain bilingual functions have in shaping individual and communal identity.

In relation to code-switching, future studies could conduct surveys that asked specific ques-

tions geared toward this topic. Although many participants commented on code-switching, our study asked more general questions concerning dialects in the South Valley. For example, instead of only asking what type of dialect is spoken in the South Valley, especially if one is interested in finding attitudes towards code-switching, one could ask questions such as: 1) Do few, some, or many speakers mix the languages, and 2) Are there things you can say in Spanish that you cannot say in English? (Poplack, 1980, p. 594). Indeed, the current study offers valuable data concerning language attitudes, but it is only the beginning. There are many other avenues to be explored.

One possible direction would be in terms of education. The distinction that is made between 'our' Spanish and 'their' Spanish from the South Valley residents provides insight on the division that exists within the people of the community, and the effects this potentially has on education. This relates to Mendoza-Denton's study, *Fighting Words* (1999), in which the *sureñas* and *norteñas* disassociate themselves from each other by forming gangs. This separation is further evaluated, and the results find that when those who identify more with their Mexican roots, or better known as the *sureñas*, chose to speak Spanish over English, will lead to long-term effects on their education. This is consequential as it may decelerate their educational career by being placed in courses that will hinder their college acceptance. In addition, people who identify or display negativity towards English will be affected and this may "retard their own entry into mainstream English classes because of their unwillingness to enter classes with Norteñas" (p. 51). It is evident that this is an attitudinal concern and that this division in the community is strong enough to cause an effect on the residents' education. For this reason, further development

can be accomplished to examine how the performance of educational policies and programs intertwine with group identity, which is escalated by linguistic resistance and disassociation with English.

Additionally, as in the Anderson-Mejías study, further analysis can be presented between language maintenance within generations. Another primary question is whether or not Spanish is maintained when people from this region move away to other areas. The investigation in Anderson-Mejías's study gave insight into the possibility that Spanish appears to change as generations move further away from the immigration experience, which leaves an opening for further research. Since this study compares in many aspects, it would be advantageous to further work in this area to ascertain how significantly this change can affect the language.

Another area mentioned previously was the complexity of living in a dual language community. To live within this duality, and before establishing attitudes towards the languages spoken, an understanding of the communities' history is preferable. The history of immigration and colonization can help new comers or outsiders understand language diversity that exists within these types of communities. Therefore, after becoming familiar with the communities language varieties this duality can be further studied with respect to language use and maintenance.

### Conclusions

As in the case from the study by Achugar (2008), the collection of data presents perspectives from the community members in reference to Spanish, which includes their beliefs, values and attitudes. Our intention was to compare those studies done in towns such as Laredo, Texas and in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas with data collected from the South Val-

ley of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Specifically our purpose was to recreate the study done by Pletsch de Garcia and investigate language attitudes in border towns. The South Valley and Laredo both experience retention of Spanish, either due to the influx of immigrants or due to strong desires of maintaining the language as an indication of identity. Patterns in language attitudes were also similar.

An apparent trend is the positive attitude toward Spanish in the community, which signifies the importance and necessity it places for residents' daily lives. This has several implications for language maintenance in Albuquerque, New Mexico. First of all, it means that there is a desire within the community to use the language. However, as noted earlier, despite positive attitudes towards Spanish, there has been significant language loss in New Mexico due to both educational and legislative decisions of the state within the past century. This combination of language loss and the desire to reverse this process coincides with the increase of dual-language and heritage language programs. Thus, we predict that more students will enter universities, anxious to reconnect with their heritage language. From this study, it is also evident that perceptions, personal attitudes toward language varieties and identity within the community are key sources in determining the maintenance of Spanish.

### Notes

1 IRB approved May 11, 2010.

2 This is the only term that did not occur in high frequency, it turns up once; however, we felt it was relevant to include, because it points to an ideal that some speakers apparently have.

3 The authors cite Poplack's definition of code-switching as "the juxtaposition of multi-word sequences, each of which is internally consistent with the grammatical patterns of its respective language" (Poplack, 1993: 255).

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